Reduction of trade barriers

2285. SHRI M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and the United States of America propose to reduce trade barriers to bilateral high technology trade while enhancing security of such trade; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) India and US have High Technology Cooperation Group (HTCG), which is unique to both nations. The Group, chaired by the Foreign Secretary and U.S. Under Secretary for Commerce, seeks to identify steps to create a favourable environment for high-technology trade and collaboration, while enhancing the security related to such trade. It focuses on high-tech areas including Information Technology, Defence Technology, Nano-technology, Life Sciences and Bio-technology.

(b) Since the establishment of the HTCG, high-technology trade between US and India, including licensed trade in dual-use items, has grown substantially. The U.S. dual use licenses for India had climed from 423 in FY 2002 to 619 in FY 2003 and 912 in FY 2004. In value terms too, this trade has gone up from $ 26.78 million in FY 2002 to $ 90.06 million in 2004. The license approval rate has increased from 84 per cent to 90 per cent in a two-year time period.

Indo-Pak agreement regarding repatriation of fishermen

2286. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNALAFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has signed any agreement with Pakistan regarding repatriation of Indian fishermen; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) During the Foreign Secretary level talks held in New Delhi on June 27-28, 2004 it was agreed to release all the apprehended fishermen in each other's custody and to put in place

a mechanism for the return of unintentionally transgressing fishermen and their boats from the high seas without apprehending them. This issue was also raised during the meeting between the Foreign Ministers of the two countries in New Delhi on September 5-6, 2004, and again during the visit of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to New Delhi on November 23-24, 2004.

India, on October 22, 2003, had proposed establishment of communication links between the Indian Coast Guards and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency which would deal, *inter alia,* with the issue of transgressing fishermen on both sides. During the meeting between the Coast Guard authorities of the two countries on December 3-4, 2004 in New Delhi, both sides also discussed issues related to repatriation of apprehended fishermen, including through a Memorandum of Understanding which is presently under discussion.

International conference on U.N. organished by I.C.W.A.

2287. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Council of World Affairs had organized an International Conference on U.N. and the New World Order in 1994 in which delegates from a large number of countries had participated;

(b) if so, the number of delegates and what financial assistance was given to I.C.W.A. for organizing the conference;

(c) the recommendations made by the Conference and whether the recommendations were accepted by Government and implemented; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes Sir, the Indian Council of World Affairs had organized an International Conference on U.N. and the New World Order from 24-26 August, 1994.

(b) The Conference was attended by 82 delegates from 73 countries and 82 delegates from India. The Indian Council of World Affairs financed the Conference from its own resources.